**Effective Reading**

# Activate Prior Knowledge

1. find out what students already know about the topic eg brainstorming, asking students to jot down what they know
2. explain/discuss some of the background information if necessary

**Set a purpose for reading the selected text**

1. ask the students to predict what the text might be about
2. get students to write down the questions on the text topic eg the first stages of the KWLH strategy (eg what do I *know*? and what do I *want* to know?)
3. explain to students the tasks they will carry out after reading the text eg making notes
4. suggest how students should tackle the reading task eg skim-read

**Develop vocabulary knowledge**

1. discuss and explain words in the text that you think may be difficult
2. use examples in the text to teach students how to use context clues to work out unknown words
3. help students identify key words in any passage or instruction

**Explain different reading skills for different purposes**

1. overview a text before reading and note headings, words in bold prints, visuals etc
2. skim-read to get the ‘gist’ of the content or locate specific information
3. analyse instructions in assignments or exam questions
4. use careful reading to fully comprehend a text

**Promote active reading**

1. discuss the task before reading – the purpose, the questions to keep in mind, the reading skills to use
2. give specific tasks for students to do as they read eg underlining key or unknown words, ticking off their predictions or answers to their questions
3. discuss the reading task with students after the reading so that they are aware of how well they coped and can identify areas of difficulty

**Check comprehension**

1. probe understanding by getting students to *ask* as well as answer questions
2. ask students to summarise or paraphrase in their own words what they have read
3. provide an outline or chart for them to fill in after reading
4. ask students to complete the ‘L’ and ‘H’ parts of KWLH –*what I have learnt and how I learnt it*
5. set a task so students have to use the information or apply it in a different situation

Pre-Reading activity

This will help to activate your prior knowledge of content and vocabulary. It is also useful to flick through the text to gain an overall ‘feel’ for it. This will help you to make predictions about what sort of text it is, how the information is presented, what kinds of information it includes, etc.

Complete the following table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Aspect** | **Details**  **(record or describe)** | **This clue tells me that the article will be about…..** |
| Title |  |  |
| Subheadings |  |  |
| Pictures |  |  |
| Drawings / Maps |  |  |
| Writer  / Source |  |  |
| Other |  |  |
|  |  |  |

I predict that this text will tell me about…

## Co-operative Reading Square

This strategy is a process of bringing what happens in reading and understanding text to the surface for learners and getting them to practise the steps in the process. The process should be repeated (six to eight times) over a period of six to eight weeks. The aim is to get students to internalise the process so that their comprehension levels improve.

* + - * + Selection of text is vital. Teachers need to consider:

\* Length \* Instructional level \* Interest \* Importance

1. Organise class into groups – four students per group is ideal, but not essential.
2. Each group of four students is given copies of the text to read. The text should be fairly short and interesting enough to stimulate discussion.
3. Students read text.
4. Each student leads the group in one of the activities given below.

Each activity involves one of the four basic comprehension skills:

* + Questioning
  + identifying key words
  + summarizing
  + presenting ideas as diagrams or other visual images.

NOTE: Each skill needs to be taught/modelled beforehand. The first few times this strategy is used it is useful for the teacher to model it. E.g. by eliciting responses from different groups in the class, and recording on whiteboard, talking through issues as they arise. The template “Co-operative Reading Square” is designed for use in the early stages of using this strategy. Students would complete each section individually, then share ideas in groups or with whole class. In this way issues can be addressed as they arise.

***Question Dice*** *are a useful and enjoyable way of developing students questioning skills. Students have a pair of dice. One has a question starter on each side: “What…?”, “Where…?”, “When…?, “How…?”, “Who….?”, “Why…?”*

*The second dice has verbs such as:*

*“is/are”, “would”, “can”, “could”, “will”, ”might”, “should”*

*Students roll the dice and use the combinations as a starter.*

## Instructions to students

Students in groups of four. Each person leads the group in one of these tasks:

1. Ask a **question** for the rest of the group to answer such as something they don’t understand, a word meaning etc. The others try to answer the question. They then each ask their question in turn.
2. Identify a **key word** in the passage and explain it. The other students then also give their key words. The group decides on 6-8 (or other specified number of) key words.
3. Retell or **summarise** the information in their own words. After each student has had a turn, the group discusses and agrees on a summary statement using their list of key words.
4. Draw a **picture** or diagram to sum up the main ideas of the passage, using the information discussed.

### Co-operative Reading Square

Read the text and then go through the following steps:

* Work through each task – the group member leads the task they have been given and the whole group helps to provide the answer.
* As you work through each task lead by a group member, write your answers in the boxes below.

1. Write a **question** about something you don’t understand such as a word meaning.
2. Write down what you think are the 6 most important **key words**
3. Retell or **summarise** the information by using each of the key words in 2 or 3 sentences.

1. Draw a **picture** or diagram to sum up the main ideas of the passage, using the information discussed.

**Tackling Texts – Strategies for Reading and Writing**

## The Four by four (4\*3) Grid (could also be a 3 \* 3 grid if you wished)

This is a grid that can be adapted to any topic/subject for any purpose at any level. In a multilevel class you could prepare more than one 4\*3 grid, with graded prompts at each level. It can be used for oral, written or visual texts.

The grid can also be used as the basis for later writing.

As learners become familiar with the 4\*3 grid, you could also get a group to preview the text and make up a grid for the rest of the class to complete. Make sure that the purpose of the information in each column is clear to the learners and they are able to reuse it in some form later in the lesson sequence.

**4 \* 3 Information Processing Grid**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **3 most important ideas** | **3 things I already knew** | **3 questions about this text** | **3 key words/new words** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |